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PHL 504.01A: Environmental Philosophy

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TOPICS IN ENVIRONMENTAL PHILOSOPHY:
“CARE AND PLACE”

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1. Course Introduction:

This course will explore new territory in environmental philosophy by examining a neglected sympathy between two different but powerful philosophical discussions. The first is feminist ethics of care. While offering a strong challenge to abstract, masculinist accounts of ethics, the feminist approach has shown how an emphasis on narratives about particular relationships in concrete situations is a fruitful alternative (or supplement) to the way ethics has traditionally been practiced. The second is the literature on place. Sense of place has proven to be one of the most potent notions in environmental thinking. From bioregionalism, to nature writing, to grass-roots, local politics, a strong attachment to place has been a cornerstone for a great deal of activity within the environmental movement. Given that sense of place is often explored narratively, is always particular, and involves communities struggling with concrete environmental situations, it would appear that there is a natural connection between the literatures on place and care. We will explore this connection throughout the semester in the hope of finding a novel and productive way to enrich environmental thought.

I will be asking you to focus your thoughts about care and place on a particular favorite location of your choosing. In addition to describing this place to me and your fellow students in the first two weeks of class, you will be asked to return to it in your mind each week and add thoughts prompted by our reading (see ‘course requirements’ below). True to the ethos of this class, your thoughts should be made concrete and particular through this place of your choosing.

2. Reading Material:

Virginia Held, *The Ethics of Care: Personal, Political, Global* (Oxford: Oxford University Press) 2006.

Daniel Kemmis, *Community and the Politics of Place* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press) 1990.

Materials on Moodle (M)

3. Reading Assignments (provisional):

Week 1 (Jan 29-31). INTRODUCING AND LOCATING OURSELVES
(Johnson (M), Bass (M), Quammen (M), Haines (M),
Vindex (M))

Week 2 (Feb 5-7). "THE FOIL" (TRADITIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL ETHICS)
(Regan (M), Rolston (M), Frasz (M))

*****Care for Place essay due in Thursday class (Feb 7th)*****

Week 3 (Feb 12-14). CARE AND ECOFEMINISM
(Warren (M), Warren2 (M), Held 1-2, Frye (M)(optional))

Week 4 (Feb 19-21). CARE AND ECOFEMINISM
(Held 3-4, King (M), Cuomo (M))

Week 5 (Feb 26-28). CARE, DEPENDENCE, AND PLACE
(Held 7, Kittay (M), Plant (M))
Class guest: Maggie Pittman

Week 6 (Mar 5-7). PLACE AND BIOREGIONALISM
(Shepard (M), Aberley (M), Kemmis 1-3)

Week 7 (Mar 12-14). PLACE AND BIOREGIONALISM
(Kemmis 4-6, Bond (M), Meredith (M))

Week 8 (Mar 19-21). PLACE AND BIOREGIONALISM
(Kemmis 7-8, Cheney (M))
Class guest: Daniel Kemmis

Week 9 (Mar 26-28). APACHE ATTENTION TO PLACE
(Deloria (M), Basso (M))
Movie: Green Fire

*****Take-home mid-term due in Thursday class (March 28th)*****

-----SPRING BREAK-----

Week 10 (Apr 9-11). LEOPOLD'S ATTENTION TO PLACE
(Leopold (M), Liszka (M), Norlock (M))

Week 11 (Apr 16-18). TERM PAPER OUTLINES

Week 12 (Apr 23-25). ENVIRONMENTAL ETHICS AS STORY
(Rolston (M), Gare (M), McShane (M))

Week 13 (Apr 30 - May 2). GLOBAL AND LOCAL PLACES
(Massey (M), Relph (M))

Week 14 (May 7-9). THE PHENOMENOLOGY OF PLACE
(Casey (M), Mann (M))

***** Term Papers due by e-mail, Wednesday, May 15th at noon*****

4. Course Requirements:

1. Attendance and Participation (10 points) is mandatory in this class. I will be keeping track of attendance and will be evaluating your verbal contributions to our class meetings. Part of your attendance grade is a required office hour visit anytime before April 11th.

2. Care for Place Paper (and Updates) (15 points). On the second Thursday of the semester, each student should bring to class a 3 page reflective essay on some particular place that means enough to them that they want to protect it. In addition to carefully describing the character and meaning of the place to them students should identify on a fourth page 8 *reasons* why they deem it important to protect (10 points). At the end of each week of reading (by Friday at 5pm), you should update your essay by submitting two brief thoughts prompted by the week's reading about the importance/quality /character of care for place (5 points).

3. Reading questions (5 points). Each student will be assigned several readings during the semester on which to prepare two discussion questions. (We will divide up the readings in the first week of class). You should e-mail the questions to the group by Monday (or Wednesday) at 6 p.m. The questions should be suitable for use as starting points in our class discussions.

4. Overviews (10 points). At the start of each class, someone will be asked at random to give a brief overview of the discussion from the previous class. This means that you need to keep good notes and spend ten to fifteen minutes before class refreshing yourself on our previous discussion. You do not need to give a play-by-play account of everything that happened the last time we met. Simply give us some reminders about the key topics we covered.

5. Mid-term (30 points). I shall be giving a take-home mid-term before spring break. I will hand out a number of questions on which you will be required to write-up answers before the March 28th class. The mid-term will test your comprehension of the texts and lecture to date.

6. Final Paper (30 points). By noon on Wednesday, May 15th you are required to turn in a 12-15 page term paper on a topic of your choice related to our reading. Your paper can be directed towards protection of the place you have been thinking about all semester or it can take on some of the theoretical challenges presented in the reading that have piqued your interest. Either way, it should tackle the full philosophical complexity of a selection of the ideas we have discussed. It should also be readily translatable to the concerns of the environmental movement. In week 11, you will be invited to provide an overview of your term paper topic to the class for constructive feedback (and a one page outline handed in to me) (5 points).

(Students taking the class as undergraduates are required to write an 8-10 page final paper (25%) and come to me in an office hour to discuss a 1 page outline of the paper (5%) by April 18th. You are not required to give a presentation of an outline of your paper in class during week 11).

5. General Expectations:

Please come to class with the readings for that week already carefully read. Usually we will proceed through the readings each week in the order listed on the syllabus. Be prepared to engage fellow class members in discussion.

You may not use the internet during class.

I expect complete academic integrity at every point of the course. Any academic dishonesty will lead to an automatic F for your semester grade (and that of any collaborators) and a meeting with the appropriate academic authorities. There will be no exceptions to this zero tolerance policy on academic dishonesty.

6. Additional remarks:

The University of Montana assures equal access to instruction through collaboration between students with disabilities, instructors, and Disability Services for Students (DSS). If you think you may have a disability adversely affecting your academic performance, and you have not already registered with DSS, please contact DSS in Lommasson 154. Please let me know as soon as possible about any assistance I might be able to offer. I will work with you and DSS to provide an appropriate accommodation.

Finally, please do everything you can to contribute positively to our community of learning this semester. Seminars require a concerted group effort in order to really take off. You all have a role to play! I hope you will take that role seriously.